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Security Council

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Friday, 18 February 2011, 3 p.m.

New York

President:	Mrs. Viotti	(Brazil)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Ms. Čolaković
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Araud
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	Germany	Mr. Wittig
	India	Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Portugal	Mr. Moraes Cabral
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	South Africa	Mr. Sangqu
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

The meeting was called to order at 3.55 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question

The President: Under rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I should like to invite the representatives of Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Somalia, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe to participate in this meeting.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Reuben (Israel) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter dated 18 February 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations, which will be issued as document S/2011/79 and which reads as follows:

> "I have the honour to request that, in accordance with its previous practice, the Security Council invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations to participate in the meeting of the Security Council that will be held on Friday, 18 February 2011, on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question."

I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite the Permanent Observer of Palestine to participate in the meeting in accordance with the rules of procedure and the previous practice in this regard.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2011/24, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Chile, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Finland, Gabon, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Jordan, Kuwait, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, the Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovenia, Somalia, South Africa, the Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, the United Arab Emirates, Uruguay, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen and Zimbabwe.

I wish to point out that the draft resolution before the Council contains a tentative list of sponsors. The official list of sponsors will appear in the draft resolution that will be issued under the same document symbol as an official Security Council document.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

I shall first give the floor to the members who wish to make statements before the voting.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the beginning of this week, on Monday, 14 February, the occupying Power's municipal authorities in Jerusalem adopted a plan to construct 124 new housing units in what is known as the Ramat settlement. On 16 January, the Israeli occupying authorities approved a plan to construct 1,400 new housing units in what is known as the Gilo settlement, south of East Jerusalem. And on 9 January, the Israeli occupying authorities demolished the Shepherd Hotel in occupied Jerusalem — a well-

known historic landmark and important part of Palestinian heritage — in a measure to pave the way to establishing a settlement of approximately 400 housing units.

The truth of the matter is that since the Israeli authorities lifted their settlement moratorium last September — a moratorium which, as is well known, was only partial — settlement activity has not returned to its previous rate. Rather, it has doubled. Some have estimated that, in the first six weeks since that date, settlement activity caught up with and surpassed the work that had been partially halted during the previous 10 months.

It is also worth noting here that, according to a statement issued on 12 February by the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, the demolition of Palestinian houses as part of settlement activity in East Jerusalem and surrounding areas increased by 40 per cent in 2010.

If this is part of the reality of Israeli settlement activity, then where are the principles of international law — the principles and provisions that our Organization was built to protect and defend, as stated in the Charter of the United Nations?

Article 49, paragraph 6, of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the protection of civilian persons in time of war stipulates that "The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies". In resolution 446 (1979), the Security Council reaffirmed that the Fourth Geneva Convention applied to Arab territories occupied by Israel since 1967. It also determined, in paragraph 1 of that resolution, that

> "the policy and practices of Israel in establishing settlements in the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967 have no legal validity and constitute a serious obstruction to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East".

The Council came to that conclusion dozens of years ago, and has since reiterated it in many resolutions on settlement activity.

If anyone still has any doubts as to the illegality of settlement activity, the July 2004 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the wall concluded that

> "the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian Territory (including East Jerusalem) have been established in breach of international law" (*see A/ES-10/273, para. 120*).

Part 2, article 8, paragraph 2 (b) of the 1998 Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court classifies as a war crime the

> "transfer, directly or indirectly, by the Occupying Power of parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies, or the deportation or transfer of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory".

In addition, in dozens of resolutions — most recently in resolution 65/104 — the General Assembly has reiterated that settlement activity in the Arab territories occupied in 1967 were illegitimate and an obstacle to peace. It has also called for an immediate and complete halt to that activity.

It is worth noting here that the Road Map, established by the international Quartet and adopted by the Security Council in resolution 1515 (2003), compels Israel to freeze "all settlement activity (including natural growth settlements)" (*S/2003/529, annex*). It also compels Israel to "immediately dismantle[...] settlement outposts erected since March 2001".

The Joint Understanding of the 2007 Annapolis Conference also confirmed the commitment of all parties to continue to fulfil their respective obligations under the Road Map until a peace treaty is reached. That of course includes compelling Israel to freeze all settlement activities. The Council adopted the contents of that concluding document in resolution 1850 (2008).

In its statements — the most recent of which was issued on 7 February — the international Quartet has continued to call for the implementation of the provisions of the Road Map, including a halt to settlement activity.

These are the provisions of international law on settlements. These are the resolutions of the General Assembly. These are the resolutions of the Security Council. This is the legal opinion of the International Court of Justice. These are the positions of the international Quartet on Israeli settlement activity.

However, these are the same positions and rulings that Israel has continued to ignore and challenge — to the point where the number of settlers in Jerusalem and the West Bank now exceeds 517,000. We have therefore submitted today's draft resolution on Israeli settlement activity, which we invite members to vote on today.

We are proud of the unprecedented number of States — more than 100 — that have agreed to sponsor the draft resolution. We would like once again to express our special thanks to those States. The purpose of the draft resolution is to have the Security Council play its required role and choose the side of justice and righteousness. We therefore hope that the draft resolution will enjoy unanimous support from the members of the Council.

We have come to the Council not just because we believe that our cause is a just one, which it is. We are also here because we believe in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Organization's central role in upholding justice in the world, without which there can be no international peace and security. We have come to the Council because, in accordance with Article 24 of the Charter, it is the body to which the Members of the United Nations have given the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Today we have come to this Council, and we will continue to return to this Council as long as a comprehensive, just and lasting peace is not achieved in our region of the world, and as long as the Arab Palestinian people are not granted the possibility to enjoy self-determination and to establish their independent State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital — for Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, you are the path of those who have ascended to Heaven, as sings our country, and you will continue to be the jewel of all cities.

The President: I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, Colombia, France, Gabon, Germany, India, Lebanon, Nigeria, Portugal, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Against:

United States of America

The President: There were 14 votes in favour and 1 against. The draft resolution has not been adopted, owing to the negative vote of a permanent member of the Council.

I shall now give the floor to those members who wish to make statements after the vote.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): The United States has been deeply committed to pursuing a comprehensive and lasting peace between Israel and the Palestinians. In that context, we have been focused on taking steps that advance the goal of two States living side by side in peace and security, rather than complicating that goal. That includes a commitment to work in good faith with all parties to underscore our opposition to continued settlements.

Our opposition to the resolution before this Council today should therefore not be misunderstood to mean we support settlement activity. On the contrary, we reject in the strongest terms the legitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity. For more than four decades Israeli settlement activity in territories occupied in 1967 has undermined Israel's security and corroded hopes for peace and stability in the region. Continued settlement activity violates Israel's international commitments, devastates trust between the parties and threatens the prospects for peace.

The United States and our fellow Council members are also in full agreement about the urgent need to resolve the conflict between the Israel and the Palestinians on the basis of the two-State solution and an agreement that establishes a viable, independent and contiguous State of Palestine once and for all. We have invested a tremendous amount of effort and resources in pursuit of that shared goal, and we will continue to do so. But the only way to reach that common goal is through direct negotiations between the parties, with the active and sustained support of the United States and the international community. It is the Israelis' and Palestinians' conflict, and even the best-intentioned outsiders cannot resolve it for them.

Therefore, every potential action must be measured against one overriding standard: whether it will move the parties closer to negotiations and an agreement. Unfortunately, this draft resolution risks hardening the positions of both sides. It could

encourage the parties to stay out of negotiations and, if and when they did resume, to return to the Security Council whenever they reached an impasse.

In recent years, no outside country has invested more than the United States of America in the effort to achieve Israeli-Palestinian peace. In recent days we offered a constructive alternative course forward that we believe would have allowed the Council to act unanimously to support the pursuit of peace. We regret that this effort was not successful and thus is no longer viable.

The great impetus for democracy and reform in the region makes it even more urgent to settle this bitter and tragic conflict in the context of a region moving towards greater peace and respect for human rights. But there simply are no shortcuts. We hope that those who share our hopes for peace between a secure and sovereign Israel and Palestine will join us in redoubling our common efforts to encourage and support the resumption of direct negotiations.

While we agree with our fellow Council members — and indeed with the wider world — about the folly and illegitimacy of continued Israeli settlement activity, we think it unwise for this Council to attempt to resolve the core issues that divide Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore, regrettably, we have opposed this draft resolution.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I am delivering this statement on behalf of the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

The United Kingdom, France and Germany are seriously concerned about the current stalemate in the Middle East peace process. We each voted in favour of the draft Security Council resolution because our views on settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are clear: they are illegal under international law, are an obstacle to peace and constitute a threat to a two-State solution. All settlement activity, including in East Jerusalem, should cease immediately.

Our primary goal remains a just and lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We will continue to work actively to turn this ambition into reality: the creation of a sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State, living in peace and security side by side with Israel. Our views are clearly set out in the European Union Foreign Affairs Council conclusions, most recently in December 2009 and December 2010.

We believe that Israel's security and the realization of the Palestinians' right to statehood are not opposing goals. On the contrary, they are intimately entwined objectives. We therefore call on both parties to return as soon a possible to direct negotiations towards a two-State solution on the basis of clear parameters.

For those negotiations to be successful, they will need to achieve an agreement on the borders of the two States, based on 4 June 1967 lines, with equivalent land swaps as may be agreed between the parties. They will need to achieve security arrangements that for Palestinians respect their sovereignty and show that the occupation is over, and for Israelis protect their security, prevent the resurgence of terrorism and deal effectively with new and emerging threats. The negotiations must achieve a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee question, and they must fulfill the aspirations of both parties for Jerusalem. A way must be found through negotiations to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the future capital of both States.

Despite the challenges ahead, the key elements of a solution are well known. Thanks to work commended by the international community as a whole, the Palestinian Authority has developed the capacity to run a democratic and peaceful State, founded on the rule of law and living in peace and security with Israel. Further delay will reduce, rather than increase, the prospects for a solution. We therefore look to both parties to return to negotiations as soon as possible on that basis.

Our goal remains an agreement on all final status issues and the welcoming of Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations by September 2011. We will contribute to achieving that goal in any and every way that we can.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation voted in favour of the draft resolution. Given our fundamental position, we will not accept any unilateral actions that prejudge the outcome of negotiations on final status issues. We strongly urge the Government of Israel at last to comply with the demands of the international community and to stop settlement activity, which violates the norms of international law and hinders the resumption of Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

Unfortunately, no unanimity was achieved among Security Council members today, and the draft resolution was not adopted. However, the issue of Israeli settlement activity remains on the agenda, and the urgency of solving the issue will only increase.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and a member of the Quartet of Middle East mediators, Russia consistently continues to advocate a prompt resumption of direct dialogue between the parties by cooperating with regional and international partners in seeking a just and comprehensive peace settlement in the region, in accordance with Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles and the Arab Peace Initiative.

We hope that by implementing the still relevant Russian proposal to send the first-ever full Security Council mission to the Middle East will be a useful practical contribution towards assisting the peace process.

Mr. Moraes Cabral (Portugal): Portugal's position on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory is well known. We have repeatedly stated that settlements, including in East Jerusalem, are illegal under international law and an, obstacle to peace. That has also been the consistent position of the European Union. So it would not surprise the Council if my statement follows that of France, Germany and the United Kingdom closely.

Settlements thwart attempts to move the negotiations process forward. They also erode the prerequisites of the two-State solution, a goal to which we remain firmly committed. All settlement activities in East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, including natural growth, should cease immediately.

Our ultimate goal remains that of a lasting, just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, based on the creation of a sovereign, independent, democratic, contiguous and viable Palestinian State living side by side with Israel and its other neighbours in peace and security.

Therefore, we call on both parties to return as soon as possible to direct negotiations towards an agreement on all core issues by September 2011. The parameters of a final status agreement are known to all, namely, a Palestinian State based on the 4 June 1967 borders; a security arrangement that fully respects the sovereignty of the Palestinian State, while protecting the security of both Palestinians and Israelis; Jerusalem as the capital of the two States, in accordance with modalities to be negotiated between the parties on its status; and finally, a just, fair and agreed solution to the refugee problem.

The Palestinian Authority has worked diligently in preparing for statehood. In doing so, it has proved itself a dependable partner and demonstrated its capacity to assume full sovereignty as an independent, democratic and peaceful State living in peace with Israel.

As I have previously stated, it is essential that the parties urgently resume direct negotiations. Our aim is an agreement on all final status issues. With that in mind, we look forward to active international and regional diplomatic efforts so that we can indeed welcome Palestine as a full Member of the United Nations by September 2011.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): China voted in favor of the draft resolution drawn up by Arab States on the Israeli settlements. We deeply regret that the draft resolution was not adopted.

China has always firmly supported the just cause of the Palestinian people to gain legitimate national rights. At present, Israel continues to build settlements, which has become a major obstacle to mutual trust and the resumption of peace talks between Palestine and Israel.

China resolutely opposes Israel's construction of settlements and the separation wall in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the West Bank and East Jerusalem. We firmly support the legitimate demands of the Palestinian people. China has always maintained that, on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map to Middle East peace, Palestine and Israel should conduct dialogue and negotiations to settle differences so as to ultimately establish an independent State of Palestine, with the two countries living side by side in peace.

China supports the Security Council playing its due role in the Middle East peace process. We also hope that the Quartet meeting to be held on the question of the Middle East will achieve a positive outcome and will help break the stalemate in the Middle East process.

Mr. Sangqu (South Africa): My delegation regrets that the Council was unable to adopt the draft resolution before it today. South Africa voted in favour of the draft resolution, as we joined those that believe that the illegal Israeli settlement activity has become an obstacle to moving the peace process forward.

The continued illegal settlement-building changes the geographical composition of Palestine and has the potential to render the desire to bring about a two-State solution impossible, which is in line with the overwhelming call for the creation of the sovereign, independent, viable and contiguous State of Palestine, coexisting peacefully alongside the State of Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Council has an obligation to ensure that the peace process moves forward and that a final settlement can be reached between the parties. The Council should therefore respond to obstacles, such as the illegal settlement activity, which hampers the peace process, and thus poses a threat to international peace and security.

Despite the failure of the Council to act, the peace process must move forward after today. Both parties are still under the obligation to comply with their previous agreements and obligations in terms of the Quartet Road Map, which includes those on illegal settlements. In that regard, we call on Israel to immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem.

The draft resolution called on the parties to continue their negotiations on final status issues, which include questions on Jerusalem, settlements, borders and refugees. It is imperative that the parties do not abandon the path of negotiations. We in the international community have an obligation to support the parties in their endeavour to reach that goal.

Mr. Osorio (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): In noting the results of the voting on the draft resolution submitted for the Council's consideration, on which Colombia voted in favour, I would like to reaffirm my country's conviction that the appropriate path to achieve a lasting peace between the peoples of Israel and Palestine and the coexistence of the two States is a negotiated solution, not hostile confrontation.

We voted in favour of the draft resolution, as we have done on other occasions on this issue, because we believe that settlements contravene international law and do not comply with the agreements under the Road Map and the negotiations promoted by the Quartet.

We support bilateral, direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis as the only possible way to resolve the existing differences. We share the vision of the creation of two democratic States living in peace and with defined, recognized and safe borders. We firmly believe in the need for both parties to act in keeping with international law and to comply with their respective commitments and obligations.

For Colombia the fundamental principles in the peaceful settlement of disputes are the obligation not to use force in international relations, and the free determination of peoples. Israelis and Palestinians cannot continue to be bogged down in confrontation without confidence. We vigorously call on them to maintain and intensify the talks between the parties on the basis of mutual respect and recognition of the identity and rights of each people. The Palestinians have the right to their own State that lives in peace with Israel and progresses toward common prosperity.

Ms. Čolaković (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Bosnia and Herzegovina voted for the draft resolution, and I wish to explain our position.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is and will remain committed to the two-State solution, with the State of Israel and an independent, democratic and viable State of Palestine living side by side in peace and security. We consider that to be a basic precondition for achieving lasting peace and security in the region.

One of the main obstacles to achieving that goal is the settlement activities on occupied land, which are illegal under international law and are contrary to Israel's obligation under the Road Map. Bosnia and Herzegovina calls upon Israel to respond positively to appeals by the international community and end all settlement activities in occupied Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem.

Furthermore, we urge the parties to take the necessary decision to overcome the current obstacles in the peace process as the only way to secure a better future for their peoples through a resumption of direct talks.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): This Council has consistently expressed concern over the situation in the Middle East, including the continued Israeli settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. This issue is of serious concern to my delegation because of its implication for peace and security in the region. We view the cessation of settlement activities as a confidence-building measure with the potential to return the parties to the negotiating table. We therefore felt constrained to vote in favour of the draft resolution, and we regret that it was not adopted.

We reiterate that it is time for the parties to this dispute to demonstrate their undivided commitment to peace. They should remove all obstacles to the resumption of direct negotiations to resolve persistent permanent status issues. The Council, for its part, should continue its supporting role in the peace process, fostering security and stability within the occupied Palestinian territory.

For our part, we shall remain firmly committed to the goal of seeing a secure State of Israel living side by side in peace and security with an independent State of Palestine with recognized borders.

While peace in the Middle East is attainable, it must come on the back of sustained political will and commitment. The Middle East needs peace. The world needs peace.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): Consistent with our long-standing position of solidarity with the Palestinian people and our position that the settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories are illegal under international law, India co-sponsored the draft resolution and voted in its favour. It is our sincere hope and expectation that wiser counsel will prevail among the parties concerned and that the path of dialogue will be the path followed to realize peace in the region.

Even though the Council today could not adopt the resolution, we expect that the sentiments expressed by its members will impel the parties to serious introspection and to the realization that the only way to resolve the problem is to restart talks on all pending issues so that a lasting peace is established and that — as mentioned by many in the Council today — by September 2011 we can welcome to the international community an independent, viable and united State of Palestine, living within secure and recognized borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital, side by side and at peace with Israel.

Mr. Moungara Moussotsi (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution submitted by the non-aligned countries to encourage the two parties to resume direct talks with a view to a lasting peace in the Middle East. We thus invite the State of Israel and Palestine to overcome all differences and to come to an agreement with a view to resuming direct negotiations and to work towards a just and lasting peace, with the ultimate goal of creating a Palestinian State living side by side with Israel within secure and internationally recognized borders.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity as representative of Brazil.

The peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine is, arguably, the single most important objective for peace and stability in the world. For its part, the continued expansion of Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory became the most important obstacle to concrete progress in negotiations leading to a just and durable solution to this question. It is therefore only natural that the Security Council deal with this issue in a manner consistent with its primary responsibility for international peace and security. We welcome an increased engagement by the international community, including through the Security Council, in this matter.

The draft resolution that we had before us today restated that all Israeli settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, are illegal and constitute a major obstacle to the achievement of peace on the basis of the two-State solution. It recalled Israel's obligations under the Road Map endorsed by resolution 1515 (2003). It also called for the immediate resumption of credible negotiations.

Brazil co-sponsored the draft resolution not only because we fully agreed with its content, but also because we firmly believe it could help us achieve the two-State solution and therefore contribute to the long-term security and stability of the whole region, including Israel. In seeking to advance the peace process, we also have in mind Israel's right to live in security, free of attacks and threats to its existence. Brazil and Israel are good friends and important partners, both bilaterally and through MERCOSUR.

We also co-sponsored the draft resolution because its adoption would have sent some urgent key messages. The first is that continued disregard for international obligations relating to settlement

construction poses a threat to peace and security in the region. Second, halting settlement activities should be seen not as a concession but as the lawful conduct under international law. Third, unilateral action shall not prevail. Upholding international law is always in the interest of peace. The Security Council cannot settle for less.

Over the years, Brazil has supported the fulfillment of the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people for a cohesive, secure, democratic and economically viable State within the 1967 borders and with East Jerusalem as its capital, living side by side and in peace with the State of Israel. As we have strengthened our diplomatic relations with all countries in the region, we have also deepened our commitment to stability in the Middle East, our condemnation of all forms of terrorism and our conviction that the peace process must be accelerated.

Brazil's recent recognition of the Palestinian State is fully consistent with our willingness to contribute to a just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine. As explicitly indicated at that time, that decision did not mean abandoning the conviction that negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians are indispensable. On the contrary, we see it as a stimulus for further negotiations. Only dialogue and peaceful coexistence with all neighbours can truly advance the Palestinian cause.

Many years of negotiating efforts have produced a substantial basis upon which progress can be achieved. It is our hope that the more intensive schedule of meetings of the Quartet indicates a willingness to take concrete steps that will lead to an agreement on the final status issues by September.

We believe that the inclusion of more countries in the peace process, including developing countries from outside the region and with good relations with all parties, would bring a breath of fresh air to the peace process. Brazil stands ready to participate in and support those efforts. We have been making our contribution to the Palestinian Authority's State-building efforts, including through bilateral and IBSA — India, Brazil and South Africa — cooperation.

In times of unprecedented change in the Middle East, it is even more urgent that progress be made on the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Now more than ever, the brighter the perspectives for Palestinian statehood, the greater the chances that the region will advance more steadily towards stability and democracy.

Halting the construction of settlements would be a clear signal of political will to engage in serious negotiations. To achieve an agreement, difficult political decisions will be required. Brazil is confident that the Israeli and the Palestinian leadership will display statesmanship and will be ready to make the painful concessions needed for the next generations to enjoy the benefits of peace.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): I wish to thank you, Madame President, for convening this important meeting. I wish to express our deep appreciation for your principled, sincere efforts in this process in your national capacity and in your capacity as the President of the Security Council this month.

I also wish to thank Bosnia and Herzegovina for its skilled stewardship of the Security Council in January, particularly during the Council's open debate on 19 January (see S/PV.6470 and Resumption 1) and throughout the series of consultations undertaken on the draft resolution on Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, on which the Council has just taken action.

At this time, I also wish to express Palestine's deep appreciation and gratitude to Lebanon, the Arab representative on the Security Council, for its principled efforts and unwavering support throughout this important exercise.

We also wish to thank the Arab Group for their serious consideration of this matter, their constant coordination and their strong support. We express appreciation for the able leadership of the Chairs of the Arab Group since we began this exercise in December 2010. In that context, we also extend our appreciation to the important and sincere efforts of the Arab League Follow-up Committee and its Chair, Qatar, at all levels in the region, in Cairo and here in New York.

We must also express our appreciation and gratitude to the members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and to the Chairs, Egypt and Tajikistan, for

their sincere efforts and their valuable support and solidarity with Palestine. In that regard, we also convey our thanks to the members of the NAM caucus of the Security Council for their consideration and support on this most important issue.

Of course, Palestine also wishes to extend its deep gratitude to all of the countries that co-sponsored the draft resolution, from all corners of the world — from Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. Their strong and principled support was invaluable and illustrated to us once again the importance, weight and necessity of a collective effort and position in our work in the international arena as we strive to uphold international law and make peace and justice a reality.

When we decided to come to the Security Council to address the critical and dangerous issue of Israel's ongoing illegal settlement campaign throughout the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, we did so with a sensible draft resolution reflecting agreed language and principles. That represented a responsible and serious attempt on our part, along with the entire international community, to address the issue of illegal Israeli settlement activities in order to remove that obstacle from the path of the peace process.

Our overarching goals remain to bring an end to the Israeli colonization and occupation of our land and its destruction of the two-State solution, and to create the appropriate environment and dynamics for the conduct and ultimate success of genuine peace negotiations for the achievement of the two-State solution for peace in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, the Madrid principles, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet Road Map.

Unfortunately, however, the Security Council has failed to uphold its responsibilities to respond to the crisis in the long search for peace and security in the Middle East and to legislate the existing global consensus in demanding that Israel, the occupying Power, immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.

We reiterate that it is high time to send a clear and firm message to Israel that it must comply with its international legal obligations, including in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, and cease all of its violations and its obstruction of the peace process.

Israel, the occupying Power, should not question the determination of the international community to bring an end to those violations, including its illegal settlement campaign, including in occupied East Jerusalem. The proper message that should have been sent by the Security Council to Israel, the occupying Power, is that its contempt of international law and the international community will no longer be tolerated.

We fear, however, that the message sent today may be one that only encourages further Israeli intransigence and impunity. That must be remedied. Otherwise, we will face a situation in which Israel's illegal, reckless and expansionist campaign will put in final jeopardy the prospects for achieving our collective goal, the goal that will bring peace and security to our region: the two-State solution for the peace of an independent and viable State of Palestine living side by side with Israel on the basis of the 1967 borders.

Despite the negative outcome today — and of course, we appreciate the positive votes of the 14 countries that voted in favour — we are calling and will continue to call on the Security Council to uphold its duties and responsibilities vis-à-vis the question of Palestine, because we believe in international law and in the central role of the Council in maintaining international peace and security. The Council must undertake this role seriously and consciously in the Middle East in its ongoing attempts to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, the core of which remains the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The situation on the ground in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, is intolerable and the status quo is untenable. We must continue to uphold our duties towards our people and our just cause, and will thus continue to consider all of our options at the United Nations in order to address all of the critical issues we face and to promote the achievement of a just, lasting and comprehensive peace settlement. We do this with full conviction and commitment, and with deepest gratitude and appreciation to all the member States of the international community whose support and solidarity in this long search for peace have been so vital and unwavering.

The Palestinian people and their leadership will not forgo their legitimate national aspirations and will not cease their honourable efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of this conflict in all its aspects. This includes, foremost, bringing a complete end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian land that began in 1967 and the achievement of the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to self-determination in their independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital, where they can live as a dignified and proud people, enjoying peace, freedom, democracy, security and prosperity in their homeland.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Israel.

Mr. Reuben (Israel): Direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have been, and still remain, the only way forward to resolve the long-standing conflict in our region. Therefore, the draft resolution that was before the Council should never have been submitted. Instead, the international community and the Security Council should have called upon the Palestinian leadership, in a clear and resolute voice, to immediately return to the negotiating table without preconditions and to renew direct negotiations in order to resolve all outstanding issues. This is the way to achieve peace. Indeed, this is the path through which we have reached peace agreements in the past.

Today's debate will not assist efforts to bring both sides back to the negotiating table. In fact, this process, in its adversarial nature, is likely to harm ongoing attempts to resume negotiations. It sends the wrong message to the Palestinians, signalling that they can avoid the negotiating table.

Time and time again, Israel has demonstrated its willingness to take significant steps — indeed, painful steps — to rebuild confidence between the two sides. However, these efforts were not met with similar steps by the other side. Furthermore, Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip in 2005, including the painful dismantling of all settlements, has led to an increase in terror and violence from the areas that we left.

However, Israel continues to demonstrate its willingness to renew talks, with the express goal of resolving all outstanding issues. Prime Minister Netanyahu has called upon the Palestinian leadership to return to the negotiating table and engage in peace talks in good faith. This goal is within reach, but will require painful compromises. The road to peace lies between Jerusalem and Ramallah, which are only 10 minutes apart.

In the Declaration of Principles and the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, settlements are but one of the outstanding issues that both sides have explicitly agreed to address as part of final status negotiations. Any effort to predetermine a central, permanent State issue in effect prejudges what was agreed to be directly negotiated between the two sides.

Furthermore, it is not fitting or constructive to isolate this single issue from all other core matters, such as the security arrangements, refugees and incitement, as well as the need to address the relentless rocket fire on Israel by Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip.

As the Middle East continues to undergo dramatic and historic changes, one wonders whether the issue before us is really the most relevant for discussion in this Chamber.

In conclusion, we would like to thank the United States for its long-standing and responsible leadership in this process. Its vote today reflects the understanding that the only way forward is through direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians. We reiterate our call to the Palestinian leadership to return to the negotiating table without preconditions, so that negotiations can resume without further delay.

The President: There are no more speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.